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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

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Opening Statement by
The Honorable John Fleming
Chairman

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs
At the Legislative Hearing on H. R. 258, H. R. 306, H. R. 588 and S. 266
April 7, 2011

Good morning. Today the Subcommittee will hear testimony on four legislative proposals. The first bill has been introduced by our distinguished Committee colleague, the gentleman from the 1st Congressional District in Virginia, Congressman Rob Wittman.

H. R. 258 would require an interagency cross-cut budget that will provide clarity in federal funding for restoration efforts in the Chesapeake Bay. In addition, this legislation will require that an adaptive management plan be adopted for Chesapeake Bay restoration activities. This plan would institute measurable objectives to ensure that both federal and state dollars spent on restoration are producing positive results.

The Chesapeake Bay supports more than 3,600 species of fish, plants and wildlife, and more than \$1 billion in economic activity is generated from one of the largest estuaries in the world. While millions of tax dollars have been spent to improve the quality of the Bay, these funds are distributed among many agencies and departments. The many federal and state Chesapeake Bay restoration programs lack a single comprehensive reporting system for the funding of these activities. The fundamental goal of H. R. 258 is to eliminate this serious shortcoming.

The second bill, H. R. 306, has been introduced by our colleague from North Carolina, Congressman Walter B. Jones. The goal of his legislation is to try to save the herd of wild Corolla horses by requiring the Fish and Wildlife Service to enter into a new management agreement.

I find it curious that the Fish and Wildlife Service feels these beautiful horses whose ancestors arrived on the shores of North Carolina nearly 500 years ago to be "not native to this ecosystem" and "pest animals." Yet, this same agency has spent millions of tax dollars trying to protect, restore and save the population of such listed species as the Delhi Sands fly, delta smelt, Kangaroo rats, New Mexico ridge-nosed rattlesnakes and Texas blind salamanders. I suspect that more than a few Americans would find these species to be "pests." While this is not a hearing on the Endangered Species Act, what we do know is that the Corolla Wild Horse Fund, who has

asked for changes to the management plan, passionately believes that Corolla wild horses are being managed for “extinction.”

Finally, our colleague Congressman Gregg Harper has introduced H. R. 588, a bill to rename the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi after former Fish and Wildlife Service Director Sam D. Hamilton who unexpectedly died on February 20, 2010. Director Hamilton had a distinguished 30 year career with the Service and it is my understanding that his first outdoors jobs was banding wood ducks and building waterfowl pens at the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. Similar legislation, S. 266, has already passed the Senate and I hope our witnesses will discuss any differences or concerns with that legislation as well as the House version.

I look forward to hearing the testimony on these proposals. I am now pleased to recognize our Ranking Democratic Member from the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, Congressman Sablan, for any statement he would like to make.